

# Geographic Terms

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## *Glossary*

**Congressional District (106<sup>th</sup>)** – An area established by State officials or the courts for the purpose of electing a person to the U.S. House of Representatives. Within each State, these areas must contain, as nearly as possible, an equal number of inhabitants. The number of Congressional districts in each State may change after each decennial census, and the boundaries may be changed more than once during a decade.

**Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA)** - A geographic entity defined by the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for use by Federal statistical agencies. An area becomes a CMSA if it meets the requirements to qualify as a metropolitan statistical area (MSA), has a population of 1,000,000 or more, if component parts are recognized as primary statistical metropolitan areas (PMSAs), and local opinion favors the designation. Whole counties are components of CMSAs outside of New England, where they are composed of cities and towns instead.

**County** - A type of governmental unit that is the primary legal subdivision of every State except Alaska and Louisiana; also, a type of functioning minor civil division (MCD) found in American Samoa.

**County Subdivision** – A legal or statistical division of a county recognized by the Census Bureau for data presentation.

**Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)** – A geographic entity, defined by the Federal OMB for use by Federal statistical agencies, based on the concept of a core area with a large population nucleus, plus adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core. Qualification of an MSA requires the presence of a city with 50,000 or more inhabitants, or the presence of a urbanized area (UA) and a total population of at least 100,000 (75,000 in New England). The county or counties containing the largest city and surrounding densely settled territory are central counties of the MSA. Additional outlying counties qualify to be included in the MSA by meeting certain other criteria of metropolitan character, such as a specified minimum population density or percentage of the population that is urban. MSAs in New England are defined in terms of cities and towns, following rules concerning commuting and population density.



**Minor Civil Division (MCD)** – A type of governmental unit that is the primary legal subdivision of a county in 28 States, created to govern or administer an area rather than a specific population. The several types of MCDs are identified in terms such as town, township, and district, and include both functioning and nonfunctioning governmental units. Many MCDs represent local, general-purpose governmental units, which makes them required areas for presentation of decennial census data. *See also county subdivision.*